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Title: LGBTQ+ History in Maine

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Content Areas: Social Studies

Strands and Standards: *See pages 9-10 for detailed Strand/Standard information*

- Social Studies, Grades 6-8: History 1 F1, F2, D2, D4; History 2 F1, F2, F3, D1, D2, D3
- Social Studies, Grades 9-Diploma: History 1 F1, F2, D2, D4; History 2 F1, F2

Duration: 1-3 days

Grade levels: 6-8; 9-12

Materials and Resources Required: computer, projector, access to [Maine Memory Network](#) (recommended to start a free account – students can gather additional sources into folders using an MMN account), [MMN LGBTQ History in Maine slide show](#), note paper, pens/pencils

Summary/Overview: This lesson presents an overview of the history of the LGBTQ community in Maine and the U.S., including the ways in which attitudes towards the LGBTQ community have changed over time, some of the ways LGBTQ people have faced discrimination and unfair treatment, and some of the moments in Maine and U.S. history that inspired LGBTQ people and their allies to fight for equality and LGBTQ rights.

Essential questions:

- What does LGBTQ stand for?
- What other words do Indigenous peoples use to describe gender?
- In what ways have LGBTQ people faced discrimination and violence in the U.S.?
- How have laws discriminated against LGBTQ people?
- What were some of the moments in Maine and U.S. history that inspired LGBTQ people and their allies to fight for equality and their rights? In what ways have the rights of LGBTQ people received more recognition and protection in the late 20th and early 21st centuries?

Objectives:

- Students will gain an understanding of the history of LGBTQ people in Maine and the U.S. and the LGBTQ rights movement.
- Students will be able to identify and describe moments in Maine and U.S. history that inspired LGBTQ people and their allies to fight for equality and LGBTQ rights.
- Students will answer questions about information from secondary and primary sources through close looking and hypothesizing.
- Students will examine and analyze primary source documents, art, and objects, and use the sources provided to draw informed conclusions and ask informed questions about the LGBTQ community in Maine and the United States.

Vocabulary: *LGBTQ; sexual orientation; gender identity; ally (allies); non-conforming/nonconformist; spheres; romantic friendships; Boston marriage; homophobic; ballot referendum*

Steps:

Presentation:

1. If your classroom/school has a land acknowledgement, MHS recommends beginning this lesson with a land/water acknowledgement. More information in Teacher Resources at the end of this packet.

2. Share and discuss the following history/background of the LGBTQ community in the U.S. and Maine with students, showing them images from the accompanying [slide show](#). Ask students to take notes and encourage them to record and/or share their thoughts and questions. As appropriate, take time to examine the slide show images to discuss each historical item and its connection to the history being explored. Acknowledge that this is a history and community that has roots going back centuries in Maine and one that some of students may already be familiar with and may themselves be a part of.

3. Acknowledge that it would be impossible to cover every aspect of the history of the LGBTQ community in Maine in just one lesson over one to several days and that the stories of LGBTQ people and this community in Maine should not and will not be confined to one lesson; it is a topic and a community students will encounter multiple times as they study history. This lesson can serve as an introduction to or review of the topic, as a resource to return to and use throughout a curriculum or unit of study, and as jumping off point for researching a variety of stories in conjunction with a curriculum that explores the many different stories of the many different people who have called what is now Maine their home for thousands of years.

a. **LGBTQ** is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning and is typically used as an umbrella term for the community as a whole, though there are many other terms as well and LGBTQ individuals use a variety of terms to identify themselves. These terms are used to describe a person's **sexual orientation** (person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are sexually attracted) or **gender identity** (the personal sense of one's own gender). The LGBTQ community is a diverse one that includes many people who identify as LGBTQ as well as **allies** (people who consider themselves a friend to LGBTQ community) and LGBTQ organizations like student groups at schools and universities and rights organizations.

b. Many LGBTQ Indigenous people have respected roles in their communities, something that was common prior to colonization. Some Indigenous languages have up to five words for gender states not even recognized in the English language. Two-spirit is a term coined by Native people in popular culture in 1990 that describes an alternative gender role **and** spiritual designation found within many of the Nations indigenous to North America. An [Inqueery](#) video states, "There are many definitions and understandings of Two-Spirit, and each is nation specific. The term was intentionally introduced by Native people with the goal of finding common ground and helping educate about traditional teachings in a contemporary context...It should go without saying, but two Two-Spirit is not a poetic way for non-Native LGBTQ people to express themselves." According to Passamaquoddy master basket maker Geo Neptune, "Many cultures, including the Passamaquoddy, believe that certain people are born with not just one spirit, but two inside of them—both the spirit of a man, and the spirit of a woman—making the person both male and female. Attempts to define Two-Spirit [exclusively] as a gender identity and/or sexual orientation not only erases the important spiritual role that Two-Spirits play within their societies, but contributes to the appropriation of the term by non-Native LGBTQ+ people and ultimately adds to the stigma that Two-Spirit people face within their own communities." European settler-colonialists had a culture that was much more invested in strict gender binary. In 18th and 19th century Maine, there were laws prohibiting same-sex relationships, punishable by imprisonment, hard labor, and death. Same-sex relationships and **non-conforming** gender behaviors (not in accordance with prevailing standards or customs) were seen by the majority of society as outside of the norm and wrong and thus were largely hidden. Men and women who today would be considered gay, lesbian, bisexual, non-binary, or transgender were often not able to fully express themselves or their feelings. They would have had few to no resources to help them explore their feelings and gender and did not have an established community to turn to for support, advocacy, or acceptance.

c. In the 19th century with the rise of industrialization and more men working in businesses outside the home, men and women's **spheres** (or areas of existence and/or influence) started to become more separate and American culture emphasized that there were significant differences between genders. Men were expected to play a role in and be naturally skilled at the public spheres of the world (such as politics and business) while women were expected to play a role in and be naturally skilled in the private spheres (such as home, family, and morality). At the same time, educational opportunities for women were growing. Women's colleges not only provided an opportunity for women (mainly wealthy and white women) to access education, but also to gain more independence and freedom, meet new people, and form relationships with each other. Strong friendships with people of the same sex or gender were encouraged, especially prior to marriage and especially for women. Sometimes referred to as **romantic friendships**, these relationships could be very close and intimate, and often ambiguous in nature. Though same-sex relationships were still generally unaccepted and even illegal for men, 19th century American culture was more open to women being close and affectionate with each other even after they were married to men. Women living together was also socially acceptable. "**Boston marriage**" (after Henry James's novel, *The Bostonians*, from 1888) was a term that was used in New

England in the late 19th century that was sometimes used to describe partnerships between women living together in companionship without being married to or supported financially by husbands. The term suggested that the women were living together for economic, rather than romantic reasons, and denied them a sexual existence. Sarah Orne Jewett was born in South Berwick in 1849. She grew up to become a popular novelist, short story writer, and poet. She is probably best known today for her novels *Country Doctor* (1884) and *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896), as well as the collection of short stories *A White Heron* (1886). Many of her works feature close relationships between female characters and Jewett herself had relationships with several women. Jewett had a long and close friendship, possibly a romantic relationship with writer Annie Adams Fields, the husband of Jewett's publisher James T. Fields, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Annie Fields was considered a legendary hostess who often held literary salons at her home with her husband's clients, including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and she worked closely with her husband helping to discover and publish talented writers like Emma Lazarus and Henry James. It was she who first encountered Jewett's work and encouraged her husband to publish it. After James Fields died in 1881, Jewett and Annie Fields lived together for the rest of Jewett's life, dividing their time between Fields' homes in Manchester-by-the-Sea and Boston, MA. Some suggest that Jewett and Fields were the inspiration for Henry James's "The Bostonians". After Jewett died, Fields published the book, *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett* in 1911, but personal passages were heavily edited out. Reviews of Jewett's writing and archival letters have led modern scholars to propose that the two considered themselves bonded as if married. The papers and subsequently the stories of women like Jewett and Fields were preserved because of their wealth and influence, but letters written by less privileged women who had similar relationships were often not saved and their stories often remain invisible in the historical record. (slide images: [Sarah Orne Jewett House, South Berwick, ca. 1900](#); [Eminent Women, 1884](#))

Pause to review some of the essential questions with students - ***What does LGBTQ stand for? What other words do Indigenous peoples use to describe gender? In what ways have LGBTQ people faced discrimination and violence in the U.S.? How have laws discriminated against LGBTQ people?*** – and check if they have questions they would like to ask or observations they would like to make.

d. In the early 20th century, the experiences of LGBTQ people were more visible, in some places for a time, even more accepted as people came together in cities and formed small gay subcultures. Considered the beginning of the modern age, the 1920s was an era of economic prosperity, advances in technology, and cultural changes that saw an increase in social acceptance of diverse lifestyles and people. Popular films, plays, and songs in the 1920s made references to same-sex relationships and gay clubs operated openly in cities. However, during the 1930s and in post-WWII America, and as a result of the Great Depression and political conservatism, LGBTQ people were forced to hide their identities or face scorn, violence, and government sanctioned punishment. During the "Lavender Scare" of the 1950's, LGBTQ people were thought to be a national security risk, as well as dangerous non-conformists who posed a threat to the American way of life; they were removed and barred from government service. A turning point

for LGBTQ rights came in the 1960s when LGBTQ people across the country began to publicly protest their ill treatment. Famous protests include those in Philadelphia from 1965-69, San Francisco in 1966, and the Stonewall riots or Stonewall uprising of 1969. Police routinely raided gay bars. On June 28, 1969 police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York City. When the police became violent, the people in the bar, along with those from other nearby lesbian and gay bars and people living in the neighborhood, fought back. Leading the protests were people of color, homeless youth, drag queens, and transgender people--the groups most targeted by police. The uprising inspired other protests, marches, and the organization of LGBTQ rights advocates across the U.S. The community began to demand the right to live more openly without fear or harassment or arrest. Though Stonewall was a pivotal moment for LGBTQ rights, it should be remembered that LGBTQ resistance pre-dates it, and oppression still follows it. In 1973 the Wilde-Stein Club was formed by a group of University of Maine students and was the first openly gay student organization in Maine. Inspired in part by the Stonewall uprising, the Maine Gay Task Force was formed in 1974 to help connect and support the the gay community with resources, events, organized protests, brochures, and a newsletter. (slide images: [Underground Nightclub matchbook, Portland, ca.1990](#); [Am Chofshi gay pride, Portland, 1990](#))

e. LGBTQ rights received more recognition and protection in the late 20th and early 21st centuries in the Maine and the U.S. Starting in the 1960s and continuing through the early 2000s, states decriminalized same-sex relationships, including Maine in 1975. However, an end to criminalization did not necessarily mean an end to discrimination, nor immediate widespread acceptance of LGBTQ people. In the 1980s and 1990s, homophobic reaction to the HIV/AIDS crisis and US policies like Don't Ask Don't Tell intensified discrimination. Charlie Howard, a 23-year-old gay man, was murdered in Bangor 1984. On July 7 of that year Howard and his friend, Roy Ogden, were walking down the street, when three teenagers began harassing and chasing them, yelling **homophobic** slurs (showing hatred, prejudice, or fear of LGBTQ people). They assaulted and beat Howard and threw him over the State Street Bridge into the Kenduskeag Stream where he drowned. The advocacy organization EqualityMaine (originally known as the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance (MLGPA)) was founded in response to Howard's murder. EqualityMaine works to educate and build partnerships with the public, politicians, and the media on lesbian and gay issues, to involve the lesbian and gay community in Maine's political process and promote civil and human rights. Frances Wilson Peabody was an activist and LGBTQ ally in Portland whose grandson Peter Vom Lehn died of AIDS in 1984. Following his death, Frances joined a support group and became an advocate for gay rights. She worked to fight the prejudices against the LGBTQ community as well as the stigma against people with HIV/AIDS. She helped establish the first AIDS hotline in Maine and The AIDS Project (TAP), Maine's largest AIDS service organization. She also founded the Peabody House, an assisted living facility for people with HIV that opened in 1995, and was the only one in the state at the time. TAP and the Peabody House later merged to become the Frannie Peabody Center in 2002. In 2004 Maine established domestic partnerships for same-sex couples which provided some but not all the legal rights and benefits of a marriage. In 2009, Maine

became the first state to pass a law legalizing marriage between same-sex couples through the legislature and to also have it signed into law by the Governor, John Baldacci. That same year however, voters in Maine voted to repeal the marriage law with a **ballot referendum**. A ballot referendum is a direct vote that allows voters to uphold or repeal new a law proposed by the legislature. For the next three years, the LGBTQ community in Maine continued to fight for their right to marry, led by advocates like Mary L. Bonauto. Bonauto was born in Newburgh, NY in 1961 and graduated from Hamilton College and Northeastern University School of Law. After graduating from law school she moved to Maine in 1987 to practice law. Bonauto was a leader in advocating for the passage of marriage equality in Maine and the United States, as well a leader in working to run a public education campaign on marriage for same-sex couples after the law was initially overturned. After the ballot referendum overturned the law, Bonauto said, *“Mainers from all walks of life talked to their families, neighbors, and faith communities about why marriage matters. In 2012, Maine voters approved a ballot measure allowing same-sex couples to marry, showing the entire nation that people can change their minds and embrace the families and children of LGBTQ+ people.”* Maine voted to legalize marriage for same-sex couples in 2012 and marriage was legalized for same-sex couples in the United States in 2015, Bonauto argued that case in front of the US Supreme Court. Bonauto continues to work as a lawyer and civil rights advocate to eradicate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Since 2019, Maine residents who wish to change the gender listed on their driver’s license or state ID card no longer need to provide certification from a medical provider and people who don’t identify as male or female can also choose a “non-binary” option for their ID. (slide images: [Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance Pin, Portland, ca. 1994](#); [Love Demands Justice equal rights sign, Portland, 2009](#))

Pause again to review some of the essential questions with students - ***In what ways have LGBTQ people faced discrimination and unfair treatment in the U.S.? What were some of the moments in Maine and U.S. history that inspired LGBTQ people and their allies to fight for their rights? In what ways have the rights of LGBTQ people received more recognition and protection in the late 20th and early 21st centuries?*** – and check if they have questions they would like to ask or observations they would like to make.

4. Check for student understating with review questions:

Review Questions:

1. Why haven’t LGBTQ people always been free to live openly as themselves in the U.S.?
2. Who was Sarah Orne Jewett?
3. What was the Lavender Scare?

4. What were the Stonewall riots/uprisings and why was that an important moment in the LGBTQ rights movement?
5. When was marriage equality recognized in Maine? In the U.S.?

Suggested research and further exploration activities:

1. Ask students to consider what they have learned/already know and to use primary sources available on Maine Memory Network and the Library of Congress to answer the questions *“How have LGBTQ people in Maine and the U.S. worked for and impacted equality and LGBTQ rights? Can you think of other examples of a person or a group of people who stood up for equality and civil rights?”*
2. Ask students to create a timeline of significant events in LGBTQ history and the LGBTQ rights movement and to formulate questions for events on their timeline that they would like to know more about. Ask students to consider what work they think still needs to be done to recognize LGBTQ history and to ensure equality for LGBTQ people.
3. Pride Month is celebrated annually in the U.S. in June to mark the anniversary of the Stonewall riots/uprising and to recognize and celebrate the dignity and equality of LGBTQ people. In Maine Pride Month is usually observed with community parades and festivals across the state. Mark Pride Month as a class by learning more about the history behind the celebration and how local communities are observing it.

Teacher Resources:

Tips for Acknowledging Indigenous Land/Water: Acknowledgement is a relatively recent practice, and is ideally practiced as a respectful way to address the Indigenous inhabitants of what is now North America, acknowledge human and non-human relatives, address the ongoing effects of the structure of settler-colonialism, emphasize the importance of Indigenous sovereignty and self-governance, and help students be aware and conscientious of the fact that we are living on unceded Native Homelands. Land/water acknowledgements are best developed through meaningful connections; acknowledge with respect and use a format that lets you speak from the heart. Making connections with neighbors of a Nation near to where you live is one of the best places to start when creating a land acknowledgement from the heart. Talk with your school administrators and colleagues about creating a land acknowledgement at the institutional level.

Great online resources with more information can be found here:

- https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_CAyH4WUfQXTXo3MjZHRC00aig/view
- <https://native-land.ca/resources/territory-acknowledgement/>

- https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/mainewabanakireach/pages/1311/attachments/original/1617062949/Land_Acknowledgment_Resources_2021.pdf?1617062949.

For information about the Nations nearest where you live/teach, a good starting point is the map at: <https://native-land.ca>

What we know of as “Maine” today is part of the unceded Homelands of the Wabanaki peoples. “Wabanaki” translates into English as the “Dawnland,” with the Wabanaki peoples being the People of the Dawnland, meaning those who see and greet the first light of the day. They share common oral histories and belong to Algonquian/Algonkian language groups, but have unique languages.

About Wabanaki Nations: We encourage you and your school to reach out to the Native communities in Maine to expand your learning. More information about the four federally-recognized tribal communities in Maine can be found here:

- The Aroostook Band of Micmacs: <http://www.micmac-nsn.gov/>
 - Micmac Tribal Government: http://micmac-nsn.gov/html/tribal_government.html
- The Houlton Band of Maliseets: <http://www.maliseets.com/index.htm>
 - Maliseet Tribal Government: <http://www.maliseets.com/government.htm>
- The Penobscot Nation: <http://www.penobscotculture.com/>
 - Penobscot Tribal Government: <http://www.penobscotculture.com/index.php/8-%20about/81-tribal-facts>
- The Passamaquoddy Tribe
 - Indian Township (Motahkomikuk): <https://www.passamaquoddy.com/>
 - Pleasant Point (Sipayik): <http://www.wabanaki.com/>
 - Passamaquoddy Tribal Government: http://www.wabanaki.com/wabanaki_new/chief_council.html
 - Passamaquoddy Joint Tribal Council: http://www.wabanaki.com/wabanaki_new/joint_council.html

The Abenaki are the fifth Wabanaki tribe today; however, the Abenaki are not a federally-recognized tribe as of 2021. Not all Tribal Nations that exist in North America today have received federal recognition, and not all Native Nations seek federal recognition but this does not diminish their sovereignty. There are no tribes in New Hampshire or Vermont that, as of 2019, have received federal recognition, but four tribes in Vermont have received state recognition. Federal recognition provides a federal relationship between Indigenous sovereign nations and the US government. Tribal Nations throughout North America are sovereign nations, and actively MHS: Healthcare History Page 17 of 19 work to maintain their self-governance. Federal recognition is not related to Tribal Nation sovereignty; it affords certain rights to Indigenous peoples within the laws of the United States. It is important to recognize that not all Wabanaki people live in what is now Maine, and not all Indigenous peoples living in what is now Maine today are Wabanaki. Native and non-Native people alike live throughout

Maine, the United States, Canada, and countries around the world. Maine as we know it today exists within unceded Wabanaki Homelands; the federally-recognized tribal communities in Maine own trust land throughout the state as presented through treaties.

About Maine Historical Society: Maine Historical Society (MHS) is the third-oldest state historical society in the United States, following Massachusetts and New York, respectively. Founded in 1822, only two years after Maine separated from Massachusetts and became a free state as part of the Missouri Compromise, MHS today is headquartered at 489 Congress Street in Portland. The campus contains an office building and museum, the Brown Research Library (est. 1907), and the Wadsworth-Longfellow House, the childhood home of American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. An enormous online database containing digitized images and objects from MHS's robust collection can be found online at Maine Memory Network: <https://www.mainememory.net/> Teachers can create free accounts on Maine Memory Network to save images to albums for classroom use. MHS's mission: "The Maine Historical Society preserves the heritage and history of Maine: the stories of Maine people, the traditions of Maine communities, and the record of Maine's place in a changing world. Because an understanding of the past is vital to a healthy and progressive society, we collect, care for, and exhibit historical treasures; facilitate research into family, local, state, and national history; provide education programs that make history meaningful, accessible and enjoyable; and empower others to preserve and interpret the history of their communities and our state."

Exhibits: [Begin Again: reckoning with intolerance in Maine](#)

Primary Sources: [Maine Memory Network](#); [Library of Congress](#); [Lavender Legacies Guide – Maine, United States](#)

Publications: *Precious and Adored: The Love Letters of Rose Cleveland and Evangeline Simpson Whipple, 1890–1918* edited by Lizzie Ehrenhalt and Tilly Laskey (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2019); *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* by Lilian Faderman (Simon & Schuster 2015)

Videos and Podcasts: [Precious and Adored: The Love Letters of Rose Cleveland and Evangeline Simpson Whipple](#)

My Maine Stories: [Pandemic ruminations and the 1918 death of Rose Cleveland](#); [The Equal Freedom to Marry](#)

Organizations: [Equality Maine](#); [Sarah Orne Jewett House Museum and Visitor Center \(Historic New England\)](#)

Standards and Standards:

Social Studies – History, 6-8: Students draw on concepts and processes using primary and secondary sources from history to develop historical perspective and understand issues of continuity and change in the community, Maine, the United States, and the world.

- **History 1:** Students understand major eras, major enduring themes, and historic influences in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world by: **(F1)** Explaining that history includes the study of past human experience based on available evidence from a variety of primary and secondary sources, and explaining how history can help one better understand and make informed decisions about the present and future. **(F2)** Identifying major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of Maine, the United States and various regions of the world. **(D2)** Analyzing major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of Maine, the United States and various regions of the world. **(D4)** Making decisions related to the classroom, school, community, civic organization, Maine, or beyond; applying appropriate and relevant social studies knowledge and skills, including research skills, and other relevant information.
- **History 2:** Students understand historical aspects of unity and diversity in the community, the state, including Maine Native American communities, and the United States by: **(F1)** Explaining how both unity and diversity have played and continue to play important roles in the history of Maine and the United States. **(F2)** Identifying a variety of cultures through time, including comparisons of native and immigrant groups in the United States, and eastern and western societies in the world. **(F3)** Identifying major turning points and events in the history of Maine Native Americans and various historical and recent immigrant groups in Maine, the United States, and other cultures in the world. **(D1)** Explaining how both unity and diversity have played and continue to play important roles in the history of the World. **(D2)** Comparing a variety of cultures through time, including comparisons of native and immigrant groups in the United States, and eastern and western societies in the world. **(D3)** Describing major turning points and events in the history of Maine Native Americans and various historical and recent immigrant groups in Maine, the United States, and other cultures in the world.

Social Studies 9-Diploma – History: Students draw on concepts and processes using primary and secondary sources from history to develop historical perspective and understand issues of continuity and change in the community, Maine, the United States, and the world.

- **History 1:** Students understand major eras, major enduring themes, and historic influences in United States and world history, including the roots of democratic philosophy, ideals, and institutions in the world by: **(F1)** Explaining that history includes the study of the past based on the examination of a variety of primary and secondary sources and how history can help one better understand and make informed decisions about the present and future. **(F2)** Analyzing and critiquing major historical eras: major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of the United States and the implications for the present and future. **(D2)** Analyzing and critiquing major historical eras: major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of the world and the implications for the present and future. **(D4)** Making a decision related to the classroom, school, community, civic organization, Maine, United States, or international entity by applying appropriate and relevant social studies knowledge and skills, including research skills, ethical reasoning skills, and other relevant information.
- **History 2:** Students understand historical aspects of unity and diversity in the United States, the world, and Native American communities by: **(F1)** Identifying and critiquing issues characterized by unity and diversity in the history of the United States, and describing their

effects, using primary and secondary sources. **(F2)** Identifying and analyzing major turning points and events in the history of Native Americans and various historical and recent immigrant groups in the United States, making use of primary and secondary sources.